



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

231 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106
(860) 757-2270 Fax (860) 757-2215

Testimony of Stephen N. Ment
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing
April 15, 2013

House Bill 6698, An Act Concerning Grand Jury Reform

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of the Judicial Branch regarding **House Bill 6698, *An Act Concerning Grand Jury Reform***, which makes numerous revisions to the grand jury process. As drafted, the Judicial Branch has a number of reservations about this proposal.

Notably, the bill alters the application process by abolishing the grand jury panel, and moves functions and responsibilities currently held by the Chief Court Administrator (CCA) – such as appointing the grand jury and designating the location of the investigation – to a presiding judge (PJ). On this point alone, Judicial Branch concerns include:

- Moving the process from the CCA – which has strict protocols and procedures – to local PJ's will lead to a lack of uniformity and less control over procedures, including procedures related to the creation of records and their retention;
- It is likely to create hardship within any Judicial District (JD) in which a grand jury was being handled because judges and staff at each location would have to be trained on new procedures, instead of utilizing the expertise of those currently handling these functions;
- The CCA has considerably more resources available than does a PJ, as the CCA can select any judge from throughout the state to serve, while a PJ will only be able to select from within a single JD. This also has the potential to interfere with the ability of the court to hear other matters handled by that JD.

The Judicial Branch also has a number of other concerns with this proposal. However, we are amenable to discussing this bill further with its proponents.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.